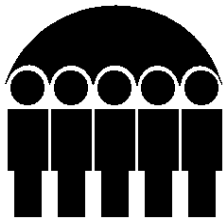


Revised November 16, 2007

Employees' Manual
Title 7
Chapter M

FOOD STAMP EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAM



Iowa
Department
of
Human Services

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Overview

Legal reference: 441 IAC 65.28(7) and (8)

The DHS Food Stamp Employment and Training (FSET) Program provides job-seeking skills training and employment assistance to non public assistance Food Assistance recipients. The FSET program is offered only in Polk and Scott Counties.

The Departments of Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) and Education are service providers for FSET. FSET program components are designed to improve the employability of program participants. The FSET components are:

- ◆ Job club
- ◆ Individual job search
- ◆ Education

The FSET program components are mandatory for people who are referred to FSET by the Automated Benefit Calculation (ABC) system. Only people who are mandatory work registrants can be mandatory FSET participants. See 7-C, [MANDATORY WORK REGISTRANTS \(MWRs\)](#), for information on who is a mandatory work registrant.

Some mandatory work registrants are exempt from participating in the FSET program. However, the FSET status of **all** Food Assistance recipients must be determined and recorded on the ABC system.

FSET Program Exemptions

Legal reference: 441 IAC 65.28(9)

Determine the FSET participation status of each household member who is a mandatory work registrant. Determine the FSET status:

- ◆ At the initial application interview,
- ◆ At recertification,
- ◆ Whenever there is a change in circumstances that would affect the person's FSET participation status, and
- ◆ When requested by IWD.

Exempt the following people from FSET participation:

- ◆ People working 60 or more hours per month.
- ◆ Pregnant women in the second or third trimester of pregnancy.
- ◆ Strikers and people who are unemployed because of lockout.
- ◆ People whose commuting time from their home to the IWD FSET office is over two hours per day (not including time to take a child to and from a child care facility).
- ◆ People with no mailing address other than general delivery (for example, a person who lives under a bridge).
- ◆ People who are laid off or temporarily unemployed who expect to be recalled to their job within the next 90 days. Use this exemption when recall is expected within 90 days from the date exemption status for FSET is being decided. The employer or union can provide verification if it is needed.
- ◆ People who have accepted a new job that will begin within 60 days. The job must provide more than 60 hours of work per month. The person must prove that a legitimate job offer has been made and accepted. The person must also give the beginning date of employment as well as pay rate and scheduled hours.
- ◆ Victims of spousal abuse who are receiving employment-related services from a shelter for battered women or other spousal abuse organization. Some shelters for battered women and similar centers offer employment-related services to residents and former residents. If a person is participating in an employment-related service operated by the shelter, the person is exempt.
- ◆ People who do not have public transportation available, if it is too far to walk to the work site. The person makes this determination. Use this exemption if:
 - The person's personal transportation is in poor condition.
 - It would be difficult for the person to complete an FSET component because of transportation problems.
 - It is likely the person would have transportation problems that might result in losing a job obtained during FSET participation.

- ◆ People who have good cause because of circumstances that will last 60 days or longer. Use judgment in granting this exemption. For example, lack of adequate child care may meet this exemption. When the reason for the exemption no longer exists, the person may be placed in a component. The household determines if adequate child care is available.

Verify a claimed exemption only if questionable. When you have made the determination, document any FSET exemptions for each mandatory work registrant in the household's case record.

Make ABC system entries to show each household member's FSET participation status. Enter the applicable coding in the [FSET](#) field on the TD03 screen for each household member.

Request From IWD to Review FSET Status

Legal reference: 441 IAC 65.28(9)

Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) can question a person's mandatory FSET status and request a redetermination by DHS. When IWD requests a redetermination of a person's FSET status, IWD sends IM the form 60-0305, *IWD Request for Review of FSET Status*. IM makes the final decision on exemptions.

If you do not need information to make a decision, decide whether to grant the exemption right away. Document your decision on form 60-0305 and return it to IWD within 10 days of the date you received it from IWD.

If you need additional information or verification to make a decision about granting an exemption:

- ◆ Notify IWD immediately that you are requesting additional information from the client.
- ◆ Make a decision about the exemption immediately upon receiving the information from the client.
- ◆ Document your decision on form 60-0305 and return it to IWD within 15 days of the date you received it from IWD.

IWD will call you if the form is not returned timely. Follow up immediately by completing and returning the form to IWD.

FSET Components

Legal reference: 441 IAC 65.28(8)"c"

The policies under this heading are informational only. Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) is the agency responsible for ensuring the policies applicable to the FSET regular components are appropriately applied.

A mandatory participant may be placed in two different regular FSET components from October 1 through September 30.

- ◆ **Job club** is a job-seeking skills training component operated by IWD. Job club consists of job-seeking skills training in a classroom setting followed by a structured employment search. IWD provides job club participants an orientation to the program that includes an explanation of:
 - FSET components
 - Participation requirements
 - Services the participants can receive
 - Participants' rights and responsibilities
 - What is considered to be noncompliance
 - The penalties for noncompliance
- ◆ **Individual job search** is a component operated by IWD. Individual job search participants are required to contact employers face to face to apply for jobs and arrange for interviews. IWD provides job search participants an orientation that includes:
 - Participation requirements
 - Participant rights and responsibilities
 - What is considered to be noncompliance
 - The penalties for noncompliance
- ◆ **Educational services** are general education development, adult basic education, and English as a second language. If IWD determines through individual assessment at job club orientation that further education would improve the person's chances of getting a job, IWD will make a referral to the appropriate education agency.

Participation in educational services for eight weeks is considered to be two components.

Participant Allowances

Legal reference: 441 IAC 65.28(11)(a) and (b)

Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) is the agency responsible for determining if a participant is eligible for participation allowances. IWD issues the allowances. IWD issues a \$25 allowance for each four-week component in which a participant is placed. The allowance is for transportation or other costs related to participation.

Dependent care costs that are incurred so the person can participate in an FSET component may be reimbursed. IWD decides if dependent care costs will be reimbursed and if the amount of the costs is within the allowable reimbursement amount.

Substitution of FIP Work Rules

Legal reference: 7 CFR 273.25

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service gives states the option to operate a mini-simplified food stamp program. This option allows the state to replace Food Assistance work rules with Family Investment Program (FIP) work rules for some households.

Iowa has chosen to operate a mini-simplified food stamp program for FIP households in which the parent is exempt from Food Assistance mandatory work registration due to caring for a child under age 6. Because FIP parents included in the program are exempt from work registration, they are not subject to Food Assistance disqualification for failure to comply with work requirements. Inclusion of a household in the program has no effect on how Food Assistance eligibility and benefits are determined.

Under the mini-simplified food stamp program, the monthly Food Assistance and FIP benefits are combined to determine the maximum number of hours the parent may participate in an unpaid work activity subject to the federal Fair Labor Standards Act under FIP.

Maximum hours for a month are determined by dividing the total amount of benefits by the state or federal minimum wage (whichever is higher). If the FIP parent works the maximum number of hours and still falls short of the hours needed to meet the FIP work obligation, the FIP parent is deemed to meet the FIP work obligation.

Including the Food Assistance benefit amount in determining the maximum number of work hours provides the parent an opportunity to increase job skills and improve employability. It also helps Iowa meet FIP work participation rate requirements.



THOMAS J. VILSACK, GOVERNOR
SALLY J. PEDERSON, LT. GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
JESSIE K. RASMUSSEN, DIRECTOR

March 14, 2000

GENERAL LETTER NO. 7-M-3

ISSUED BY: Bureau of Food Stamps, Division of Economic Assistance

SUBJECT: Employees' Manual, Title 7, Chapter M, *Food Stamp Employment and Training Program*, Title page, new; Contents (page 1), new; and pages 1 through 17, new.

Summary

Information about the Food Stamp Employment and Training Program is revised and moved to a new chapter to add information about workfare, which is a new FSET component that serves only ABAWDs. Through workfare, ABAWDs may volunteer to perform public service work. Participation in workfare meets the ABAWD work requirements and allows ABAWDs to remain eligible for food stamp benefits.

The workfare component will operate in 19 counties: Appanoose, Black Hawk, Cerro Gordo, Clinton, Des Moines, Dubuque, Lee, Linn, Johnson, Mahaska, Marshall, Muscatine, Polk, Pottawattamie, Scott, Story, Wapello, Webster and Woodbury.

The workfare program will not operate in the remaining 80 counties, each of which have small populations of ABAWDs. ABAWDs in these counties are exempt from ABAWD work requirements.

Effective Date

April 1, 2000

Material Superseded

None.

Additional Information

No desk reviews are required to implement this policy. On or after April 1, 2000, add ABAWDs in the 80 non-workfare counties back to participating households upon discovery, at the request of the household, or at the household's next recertification.

Refer questions about this general letter to your regional benefit payment administrator.



STATE OF IOWA

THOMAS J. VILSACK, GOVERNOR
SALLY J. PEDERSON, LT. GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
JESSIE K. RASMUSSEN, DIRECTOR

April 9, 2002

GENERAL LETTER NO. 7-M-4

ISSUED BY: Bureau of Financial and Work Supports,
Division of Financial, Health, and Work Supports

SUBJECT: Employees' Manual, Title 7, Chapter M, **FOOD STAMP EMPLOYMENT
AND TRAINING PROGRAM**, Title page, revised; Contents (page 1), revised;
and pages 1 through 13, revised.

Summary

This chapter is revised to:

- ◆ Change the amount of the FSET participation allowance from \$50 to \$25.
- ◆ Remove some policies that were for Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) use only, to avoid confusion over which responsibilities were those of IWD and which were those of DHS. The policies on IWD responsibilities for the workfare program are retained for informational purposes only,
- ◆ Added cross references to food stamp policies that are used in conjunction with the workfare program.
- ◆ Change the counties in which workfare will operate. Workfare will operate in 8 counties:
 - Black Hawk
 - Cerro Gordo
 - Des Moines
 - Lee
 - Linn
 - Polk
 - Scott
 - Webster

Any ABAWD living in a county not operating the workfare program is exempt from ABAWD work requirements.

Effective Date

May 1, 2002

Material Superseded

Remove the entire Chapter M from Employees' Manual, Title 7, and destroy it. This includes the following pages::

<u>Page</u>	<u>Date</u>
Title page	March 14, 2000
Contents (page 1)	March 14, 2000
1-17	March 14, 2000

Additional Information

Refer questions about this general letter to your area income maintenance supervisor 2.



STATE OF IOWA

THOMAS J. VILSACK, GOVERNOR
SALLY J. PEDERSON, LT. GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
JESSIE K. RASMUSSEN, DIRECTOR

December 17, 2002

GENERAL LETTER NO. 7-M-5

ISSUED BY: Bureau of Financial and Work Support,
Division of Financial, Health and Work Support

SUBJECT: Employees' Manual, Title 7, Chapter M, **FOOD STAMP EMPLOYMENT
AND TRAINING PROGRAM**, Title page, revised, Contents (page 1), revised;
and pages 1 through 5, revised.

Summary

This chapter is revised to:

- ◆ Remove references to Workfare.
- ◆ Add clarification to the exemption for people who do not have public transportation available, if it is too far to walk to the work site. The person makes the determination on the availability of transportation and whether the distance is too far to walk.
- ◆ Add clarification is added for the "good cause because of circumstances that will last 60 days or longer" exemption that the household determines if adequate child care is available.

Effective Date

January 1, 2003

Material Superseded

Remove the entire Chapter M, Employees' Manual, Title 7, and destroy it. This includes:

<u>Page</u>	<u>Date</u>
Title page	April 9, 2002
Contents (page 1)	April 9, 2002
1-13	April 9, 2002

Additional Information

Refer questions about this general letter to your area income maintenance supervisor 2.



STATE OF IOWA

CHESTER J. CULVER, GOVERNOR
PATTY JUDGE, LT. GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KEVIN W. CONCANNON, DIRECTOR

November 16, 2007

GENERAL LETTER NO. 7-M-6

ISSUED BY: Bureau of Financial and Work Supports
Division of Financial, Health and Work Supports

SUBJECT: Employees' Manual, Title 7, Chapter M, **FOOD STAMP EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAM**, Title page, revised; Contents (page 1), revised; and pages 1 through 5, revised.

Summary

This chapter is revised to:

- ◆ Add information about the mini-simplified food stamp program. Under this program, FIP parents caring for a child under age 6 will have Food Assistance work rules replaced with FIP work rules.

The monthly Food Assistance and FIP benefits are combined to determine the maximum number of hours the parent may participate in an unpaid work activity subject to the federal Fair Labor Standards Act under FIP. This provides the parent an opportunity to increase job skills and improve employability and helps Iowa meet FIP work participation rate requirements.

Because these parents are exempt from Food Assistance mandatory work registration, inclusion of the household in the mini-simplified food stamp program has no effect on how Food Assistance eligibility and benefits are determined.

- ◆ Change references from "Food Stamps" to "Food Assistance" where appropriate. The chapter title stays the same because Iowa uses the federal name for the work and training program.

Effective Date

Upon receipt.

Material Superseded

Remove Chapter M from Employees' Manual, Title 7, and destroy it. This includes the title page, table of contents, and pages 1-5, all dated December 17, 2002.

Additional Information

Refer questions about this general letter to your area income maintenance administrator.